

JAPANESE IMMIGRATION AND HER HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Lecture given at 7-4-1
December 16, 1943
Mr. Choyei Kondo

I

Japanese immigration question is a very recent one. First, she had her own immigration question against those coming from the main land.

First historical non-record was that of the naturalization of a certain Korean prince with his family and followers in 27 B.C. He evidently had some trouble with his father and immigrated to Japan and became Japanese citizen with his followers. Then in 276 A.D. we have in our historical record about the immigration from Korea in large numbers. We all know that Japanese themselves are not the original race in the island. They came from the south, from China, from Korea, from Mongolia, and from the north. It is evidently very clear that our ancestors were savages.

In the year 276 A.D., Japan began to invite some artisans from Korea. Record also shows that they invited many irrigation workers for the improvement of lands in the Yamato district, and in 306 A.D., the Japanese Court sent its commissioners to speak to China to get some women weavers. By this time many beautiful dry goods began to come from China and that naturally led them to send for the teachers to teach their methods. Then in 310 A.D. a group of Chinese women weavers arrived in Japan. Please remember that it took three years to get these Chinese women weavers, so you can imagine how poor the transportation was at that time.

In 467 A.D., they sent for the ceramic workers of China. Even today what we ordinarily call Chinaware is called "Ka-ra-tsu", meaning, ware of "Go" or product of the "Go" dynasty, or in present explanation, Chinaware. Japan at that time did not have anything to boast about her farming implements nor for any manufacturing industries. The nearest place where she was able to get the teachers and instructors were from Korea, as history shows. In 493 A.D., many farmers, builders, carpenters, etc., from Korea and China, came to Japan. Some of them started to teach the Japanese how to cultivate the mulberry trees. You can see the trace of it in

present Shizuoka city and its vicinity as well as around Tokyo.

In 471 A.D., another large number of immigrants numbering about 18,000 came to Japan from China. They were evidently far superior workers than the Japanese. This was the era people thought so much of the student who went to China to study. By principles of instinct and of natural preservation of self, we see in our history in 481 A.D. that the Government appointed over-seers for foreigners. I want to explain that these over-seers do not mean that they were task masters. They were just appointed to look after the comfort as well as other regulations. One explanation is due here. Japanese, Chinese, and Korean are of the same color and they inter-married and then they assimilated, so by this time nearly all those who came from Korea and China have been well naturalized.

The politicians seem to start trouble in every age, for in 940 A.D. census was taken and there were 7500 naturalized families of these people. After that, we do not have any historical record about mass immigration from China or Korea, but it is natural to suppose that they came steadily. We have records to show that often the Government prohibited immigration from Korea and China with exceptions of merchants and ship workers.

About a century later in 1549, we have the first record of white race coming to Japan. They were the Jesuits and then Christianity was welcomed by the natives and its propagation went like "wild fire" for a century. In 1637, eight catholic priests began to accuse the Protestants and Protestants preachers would condemn the Catholics, telling the Japanese that the religion of Christianity was used as a cloak for conquering Japan. The Japanese naturally took precaution, and the religion Buddhism spread its propaganda and as result of it in 1638 all Japanese ports were closed to foreigners except for one port in Kiu-su where Dutch were allowed to trade once a year. From then for about 200 years, the country was completely closed to outsiders and its natives were not allowed to go out. Japan lived in absolute isolation without association with the outside world except China and Korea. In 1850, foreign ships began to come to Japan, and in 1854 Japan again opened its ports.